Comforted.

I'd just been desperate all that day; I
couldn't stand one thing more.
The work was piling and piling up, like an
awful mountain before.
I gave my dishcloth a twist and wring—the
wring of my bitterest mood—
And said, "If the Lord is tender or cares,
He'll show me a token for good."

And Milly turned, as she stood outside, in
her pretty new, figured gown.
I saw the tears in her big blue eyes. God
b'ess her! They seemed to dro n
A little of all I was suffering. She waited
and then said she,
"Perhaps He sends us some tokens that we
do not look to see."

When she was gone I sat down and cried,
with my head on the old red shawl;
I almost thought there wasn't a God to plan
for this world at all!
But after I'd cried my tears away I thought
of what Milly had said—
I thought of it all the afternoon and when
I had gone to bed.

In the morning I went to the door, and
there was my cactus at last in bloom—
A great, red, glorious blossom that had
burst 'twixt the light and the gloom
And when I looked deep into its heart I
I felt a kind of an awe:
That sheaf of stamens, that perfect cup!
But that wasn't all I saw.

I gazed at the gnarly, prickly plant, so bare
and crooked and dry,
With that blossom just like a rose star drop,
ped out of the morning sky,
Then sank to my knees beside the door, and
there, on the cold, wet sod,
I knew there was One who cared for me,
and He was the loving God.

For, O, if He has the power to make such
a flower, by love divine,
Perhaps He will bring a pure, white soul
from such a poor life as mine.
It is dry and twisted and dreary, filled up
with my household dust;
But, ah! I have seen His token, and I
know I can wait and trust.

Somehow the day became solemn, and long
ere the sun was low
I took the Bible and read the words I had
treasured so long ago.
The stars they whispered immortal things
of a great Heart over me;
And I prayed, as I pray with every night,
"Lord open my eyes to see!"

—Ellen Hamlin Butler.

Mathematical Christian.

"I believe in spontaneity," said Fred Ackerman.

"I believe in rains," retorted Henry Sayers; "which is another way of saying the same thing. But I believe in wells and cisterns just as much as though I did not believe in rain.

"What do you mean?" demanded Fred.

"Why," answered Henry, "if you will let me use another figure of speech, spontaneity without some check is a good deal like a horse without harness or saddle. You may have the pleasure of watching him caper over the lawn and kick up his heels in the pasture, but, unless you want to take the risk of riding him bareback and bitless, you can get no practical benefit from owning him."

"But you can't set times and places for your inspirations," insisted Fred.

"No," assented Henry, "but I can encourage my inspirations by being ready to utilize them when they appear; or can discourage them by leaving them to be frittered away and lost."

"Well, I never did believe in being a Christian by mathematical rules and tape measure; but I am willing to be convinced that it is a better way than mine."

"Good!" laughed the other. "Let us begin at once. How much did you subscribe at the dedication of the church the other day? if I may be so impertinent as to ask."

"No impertinence whatever. It is a matter of public information. I made my subscription openly. I told them to put me down for $10."

"Then you will pardon me for reminding you that your income and mine are the same, and there is very little difference in our necessary expenditures. Now, don't think me egotistical—for I have a purpose beyond that—when I tell you that I subscribed $25."

"I heard that announced, and trembled for you. I knew you could not afford it, and was afraid you had yielded to the enthusaism of giving which seemed to effect the audience.

"But I can afford to give it, you see; and it was because I give by mathematical rule, and not by impulse, that I can afford it. Had I been guided solely by the impulse of the moment I presume I should not have given more than ten dollars."

Fred opened his eyes wide and bent his ear to hear the explanation.

"You see," went on Henry, "I divide my income systematically into several funds. Out of every dollar I take the tenth as the Lord's money and set it aside sacredly. This I divide among the various church expenses and benevolences, so that I know each year what I am able to give to all of them. In addition to this I reserve a certain portion from which I can draw when unexpected calls come, or some occasion requires more generous giving than I should be able to practice without a reserve fund. The dedication I considered one of those occasions, and having twenty-five dollars in reserve I subscribed it."

Fred was silent for a time, and then broke out with: "And do you carry this same mathematical exactness into every-thing else pertaining to your religion?'

"As far as I can, yes;" was the answer. "For instance, what is your method of Bible study?"

"Method? Why, I don't know that I have any. When I feel like it I just pitch in and read a whole lot and think over it. Of course I study the Sunday-school lesson and the prayer-meeting topic when I have time, but—"

"Yes, I see. You have a real relish at times for Bible study, and just at those times, probably, your appetite exceeds your leisure. Now why would it not be a good thing to store that zest and relish up in a reservoir, as it were, so as to draw upon it for such time as you need to, when you have leisure but lack the inclination to take down your Bible and study it?"

"Store it up in a reservoir? I don't understand you," exclaimed Fred.

"Why, I mean by mapping out a course of Bible study or studies linked together, so that one naturally leads to the other and excites desire for it. Then, having gone over the outline of your plans, and enjoyed one of the studies, you are stimulated to take up the work again at stated periods, even though you do not feel like it at the moment; just as the table of contents of a book excites you by its suggestive chapter heading to go on farther and farther in it."

"I believe it would be a good idea," Fred acquiesced.

"It was John Wesley's plan," said Henry.

"That's so," said Fred. "Now is there any other way in which you bring your mathematical exactness into your Christian life?"

"Well," hesitated Henry, "there is another way. I do not know whether I can explain it to you. You see, there are times when I am discouraged and weak, perhaps through some physical cause, or sympathetically, owing to distraction and cares of a worldly nature. Then, of course, the promises of God do not seem so real and sure to me as they do at times when my spiritual nature is keyed up to a higher pitch. But I find that I do not need to give way to despondency if I am only able to recall how often in the past these precious promises have been fulfilled to me. And so, taking this for my motto, 'Hitherto the Lord have helped me,' I follow the plan of keeping a chart on which I mark every day a record of the victories he gives me through grace, referring, if possible, to some particular passage of Scripture the fulfilment of which I have been able to realize by trusting. You will be surprised — or at least I was — to learn how many of these there were to record. And with the record before my eyes, it matters not how weak and despondent I may feel, I find I am strengthened and braced up to persevere, even though my faith is small."

"Well," I declare!" exclaimed Fred, casting his eyes over the chart which Henry had produced, and musing aloud over the scheme "This is a new one to me. A mathematical Christian. Everything down, even to fractions. I am not sure, after all, but, as you say, it is a better way than my hop skip-and-jump method of going with all my might when I feel like it, and sitting on the doorstep and crying when I happen to stub my toes Yes, sir; I'm going to try to husband my spontaneous impulses and become a mathematical. Pres. Witness

Sermons From the Backwoods

WHO HATH DESPISED THE DAY OF SMALL THINGS?—Zech. 4: 10.

Brethren, it is important to consider (1) what is prominently in the text; (2) what is emphatically not in it. Many men sneer at beginnings who would be amazed at consummations. One man tosses aside the acorn which another plants, yet both admire the spreading oak. Beginning next to naught; consummation, the superb tree! No acorn, no oak! Therefore, despise not the acorn. No babe, no full-grown man in the might of his maturity; therefore, despise not the babe. The A. B. C. is gateway to the cyclopædias of the world. A college may be started in a cabin. The tea kettle may be grandfather of the steam engine. A cottage prayer-meeting may mother a church. A manger may cradle a Messiah.

There is no work for Christ so small or so insignificant that it should be greeted with a sneer. Martin Luther's school master took his hat off to the boys of his charge, for his faith foresaw among them the distinguished men of the next generation. So much for what is in the text. One thing among other, the text does not say. It does not bid us be content with the day of small things. The acorn is not the oak, nor the babe in swaddling bands the man of mature years. There is work to be done between seed sowing and harvest time. Digging out the cellar is only the beginning of operations which are to give us the complete mansion. Too many of us are content with petty efforts for Christ. Conscience will not let us do nothing, but our conscience becomes content with a very small poultice. The forces of industry and ingenuity need to be introduced into our church work if we would accomplish something worthy of the cause of the King of kings. We could not run our worldly business, nor even the domestic arrangements of a story and a half house with the little fraction of industry and the lack of ingenuity which characterize our Christian service. Beloved, I would see a little gumption as well as a little grit introduced into the business we do for the Lord. O, for a holy discontent at snail's pace when the lightning express is at our command. Put away the scythe of antiquity when the mowing machine is on hand. Invent, invent, invent. There is no new plan of salvation, but there may be new ways of interesting dying men in that plan. Have an eye to possible consummations, and work for them. Dream of the capstone when laying the corner-stone. Let your strokes tell on days to come. Anticipate and act. Dream and do. Expect and enthuse. Look ahead and labor. Will and work as well as watch and wait for God. Be not content with achievement that can be spanned with a yard stick or weighed in the apothecary's scale.

Anticipate, attempt, achieve
If you in God's great might believe;
Who labors on in His great strength
Abundant harvest reaps at length.

The day of small things ne'er despise,
Nor be content until thine eyes
See through thy faith great conquests won,
And noble tasks all bravely done.

Who works for God is promised dower
Of God's unconquerable power,
Faith levels mountains to the dust,
And blessed triumph waits on trust.

—Observer.

He Began at Home.

A great many boys no sooner leave school than they begin to hunger for the great world outside. Homes becomes distasteful, ordinary tasks tedious, and the freshest, most active period of the young fellow's life is wasted in reaching forward to a greater future or in vain regrets. Not so the man who succeeds, wherever his post may be.

A young man who had been born and brought up in a New England country town began to prepare for college, and decided that after his college course he would go to the Pacific States and begin life in the spirit of a pioneer.

During his two years of preparations for college he was the most active member of his own church—which was declining in numbers, owing to the removal of many families to the city—and of the Village Improvement Society, which had become a social feature of the town Through his efforts the church was repaired, and its lawn and churchyard beautfied. He marked historic places on the old roads, and set up new guide-posts. He secured a drinking fountain for the public square, gave entertainments in the poorhouse, and set out an orchard on an old farm home.

An old farmer, with crumbling buildings and sinking walls, met the young man one day under the cool village elms, and said to him. "They tell me that you are going to college."

"I hope to go."

"And then out West!"

"Yes; that is my purpose."

"Then, if you are going away to leave us all, what makes you take so much interest in these affairs of the old town? What you are doin' will never do you any good, and we'll all be gone if you should ever come back."

"I think we ought to try to be of some service in the community in which we live," said the young man. "All places are endeared to us where we have tried to do good. They make pleasant memories. I am sure, if I have done anything for the benefit of the old town I shall not regret it."

This young man graduated well and went to the Pacific slope. He succeeded in life. With his good sense and eager, unselfish spirit, it could hardly be otherwise. He became mayor of a young city, was sent to Congress, and did much for the development of his own State. It was success organizing in his soul that prompted him to secure the fountain for the square in the old elm-shaded New England town. Seeing what ought to be done, and then doing it, is the way that success begins.—The Wellspring.

From Two Views.

What a tedious prayer meeting said John Brent to his wife on recent Thursday evening. I'm glad to get back to my own little cheerful fireside. The minister's remarks were long as the moral law. Deacon Paul went over about the same ground, with a few prosy variations. Mr. Langdon stammered and blundered till it was a relief when he sat down. Mrs. Childs said the same thing she has said for the last twenty five years; at least I suppose she did, I couldn't hear it all; Mrs. Brown uttered a few prim, stiff words, just as though she must. The young church members kept up a continual silence. The songs were the same old draggy ones, sung hilter-skilter, anywhere, without any soul or music to them. The pauses were the most frequent part of the meeting, and I believe on my soul they were the most impressive. If we are to have a prayer meeting, why not have one? I don't like so much talk.

Now, John, said Mrs. Brent, how differently we look at things. I thought it was one of the best prayer meetings I ever attended. The minister's talk was just what I needed. I had been worried all the week, and what he told us about trusting God in little things fitted my case. I was sorry when he closed his Bible and said, The meeting is open for others. Deacon Paul's remarks on the same subject interested me exceedingly, for I know he had many trials and could speak from experience. As to brother Langdon, he seemed so much in earnest that I did not notice whether he blundered or not. I was thinking of my own shortcomings and needs. The songs were old, to be sure, but for that very reason they touched my heart. I never enjoyed singing He leadeth me, as I did to-night. Perhaps I helped to make it draggy, but the music was in my soul, for all that. As to the young people, I never saw them so attentive and quiet. Many of them repeated verses which seemed to me to be very fitting. One of them told me after church that he had decided this night to be a christian. O, it has been a good meeting to me.—Selected.

Queen Victoria's Personality.

The heart of gold, the will of iron, the royal temper of steel, the pride, the patriotism, and the deep piety of Victoria have been enshrined in a small but vigorous frame, the mignonne aspect of which especially strikes those who behold her for the first time in these her "chair-days.' It was reported how, when Prince Albert was dying, he roused himself from a period of wandering to turn with ineffable love to his spouse and sovereign, saying to her with a kiss, "Good little wife!" And when the prince consort was actually passing away, after those twenty-one years of wedded happiness, it was told how the queen bent over him and whispered, "It is your little wife," at which last words the angel of death stayed his hand while once again the dear eyes opened and the dying lips smiled. But, though this be so, no one who has ever been honored by near approach to Her Majesty or has ever tarried in her presence will fail to testify to the extreme majesty of her bearing, mingled always with the most perfect grace and gentleness. Her voice has, moreover, always been pleasant and musical to hear, and is so now. The hand which holds the scepter of the seas is the softest that can be touched; the eyes which have grown dim with labors of state for England, and with too frequent tears, are the kindest that can be seen.—Sir. Edwin Arnold, in the Forum.

Correctly Named.

A brand of whisky is being advertised through the country under the title, "Horn of Plenty." At first sight the name would seem to be a misnomer; but after all it is not. Out of the diabolical preparations there will come—

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Epworth Herald.

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Heed The Record.

A record kept at Yale for eight years shows that non-smokers are twenty per cent. taller, twenty-five per cent. heavier, and have sixty per. cent. more lung capacity, than smokers. An Amherst graduating class recently showed a still greater difference, the non smokers having gained twenty-five per cent. in weight, and thirty-seven per cent in height, over the smokers, and also exceeding them in lung capacity.—New York Tribune.

Be honest. Dishonesty seldom makes one rich, and when it does riches are a curse. There is no such thing as dishonest success.

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